

# Maurice Hinchey NEWS

## 26<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT, NEW YORK

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### **HINCHEY APPLAUDS FEDERAL FILTRATION WAIVER FOR RESERVOIR**

KINGSTON - U.S. Representative Maurice Hinchey (NY-26) today attended a signing ceremony at the Ashokan Reservoir and commended the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for granting New York City a waiver from filtering 90 percent of its drinking water. Hinchey has long opposed filtration, arguing that it would have serious and irreparable consequences.

"Not only would filtration be a very expensive proposition for the city, it would place tremendous financial burdens on our local communities as well," said Hinchey. "Moreover, filtration is not wholly reliable. Degraded water sources that are filtered still run the risk of microbial contamination that can cause severe health problems. Meanwhile, resources would be diverted from watershed protection and the perception that we needn't be so diligent in safeguarding the reservoir would likely take hold."

EPA Region II in partnership with the State of New York, the City of New York, and watershed communities signed the New York City Watershed Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) in January 1997. As a result of the agreement, EPA issued an interim Filtration Avoidance Determination, which allowed the city to avoid filtering in its Catskill/Delaware drinking water, provided certain conditions were met. Hinchey has urged the parties to work diligently to take the steps necessary to extend that waiver now that the MOA has expired.

"I congratulate EPA and New York City for reaching another five year agreement on the protection of the New York City watershed which allows for the continued non-filtration of its water supply," Hinchey added. "This effort will require continued cooperation between the city, EPA and the many communities around our reservoirs. There is a highly intimate and interdependent relationship between these government bodies that must also be preserved in order for the quality of the water supply to be maintained."

Hinchey has also been a strong proponent of economic development activities that are compatible with watershed protection. A member of the House Appropriations Committee since 1999, Hinchey has earmarked \$3.4 million in Interior Appropriations bills to the New York City Department of Environmental Protection for watershed protection. In addition, he has secured \$1.825 million in Agriculture Appropriations bills to the Watershed Agricultural Council for economic development projects that are compatible with sound environmental protection practices in the watershed region. Hinchey serves on both the Interior and Agriculture subcommittees.